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Planning, Devolution and the Territorialisation of Wind Energy in the UK

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Planning, Devolution and the Territorialisation of Wind Energy in the UK

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Territory, scale and energy governance

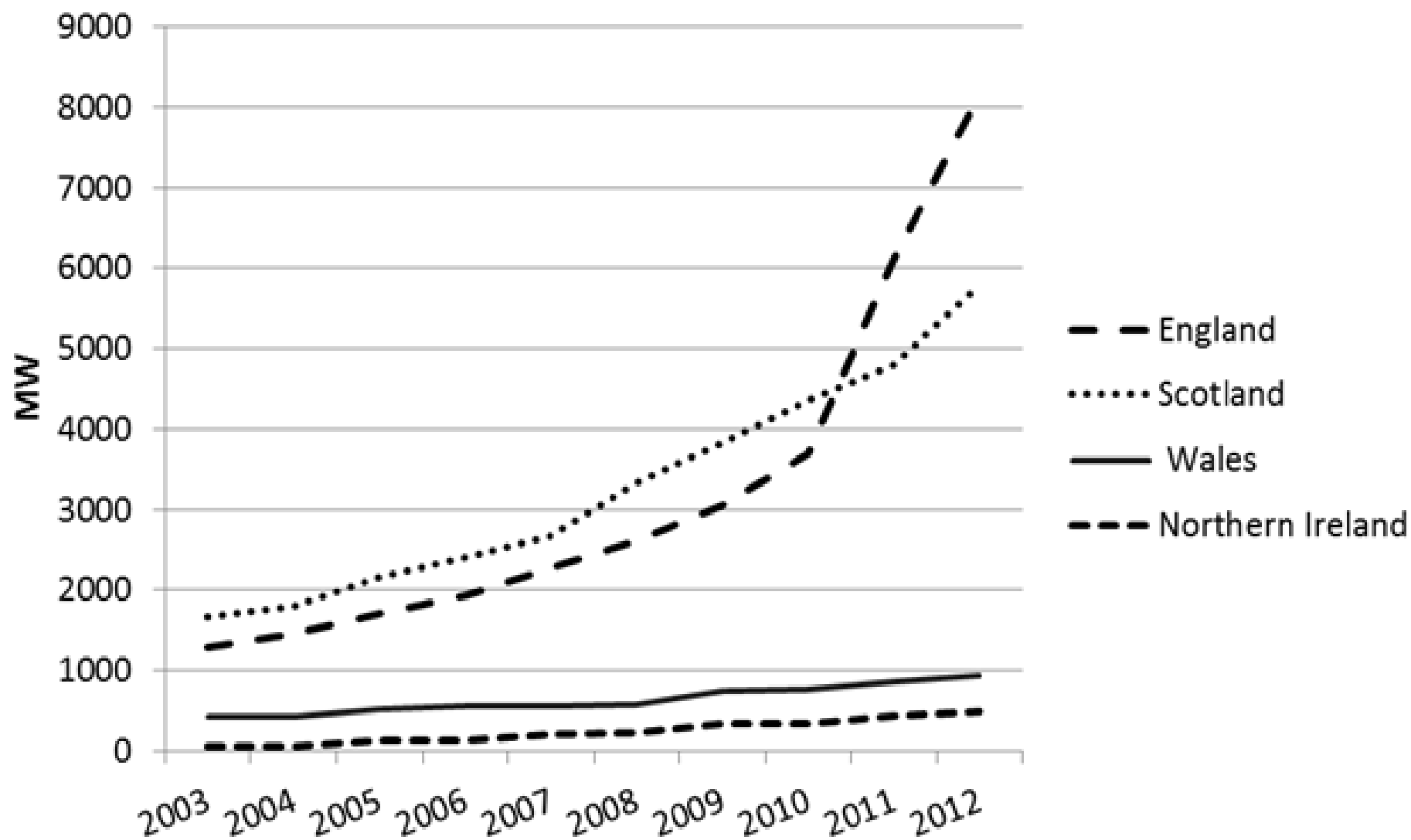
- Multi-scalar influences on energy governance and the drivers for wind energy. For example in the UK:
 - EU targets
 - Energy as a national issue
 - Reliance of devolved administrations for renewables (esp wind)
 - Re-framing of spatial relationships with energy – for example decentralised generation.
- Energy as a socio-technical system, with an underdeveloped spatial dimension.
- The role of planning in the territorialisation and politicisation of energy.

Devolution in the UK

- Devolution since 1998/99 : 'the age of wind energy'.
- An example of '*re-territorialisation*'
- Distribution of 'asymmetric competencies':
 - Planning is fully devolved to all administrations; other key aspects of energy policy are not.
- The evolving political context – divergence since 2010.



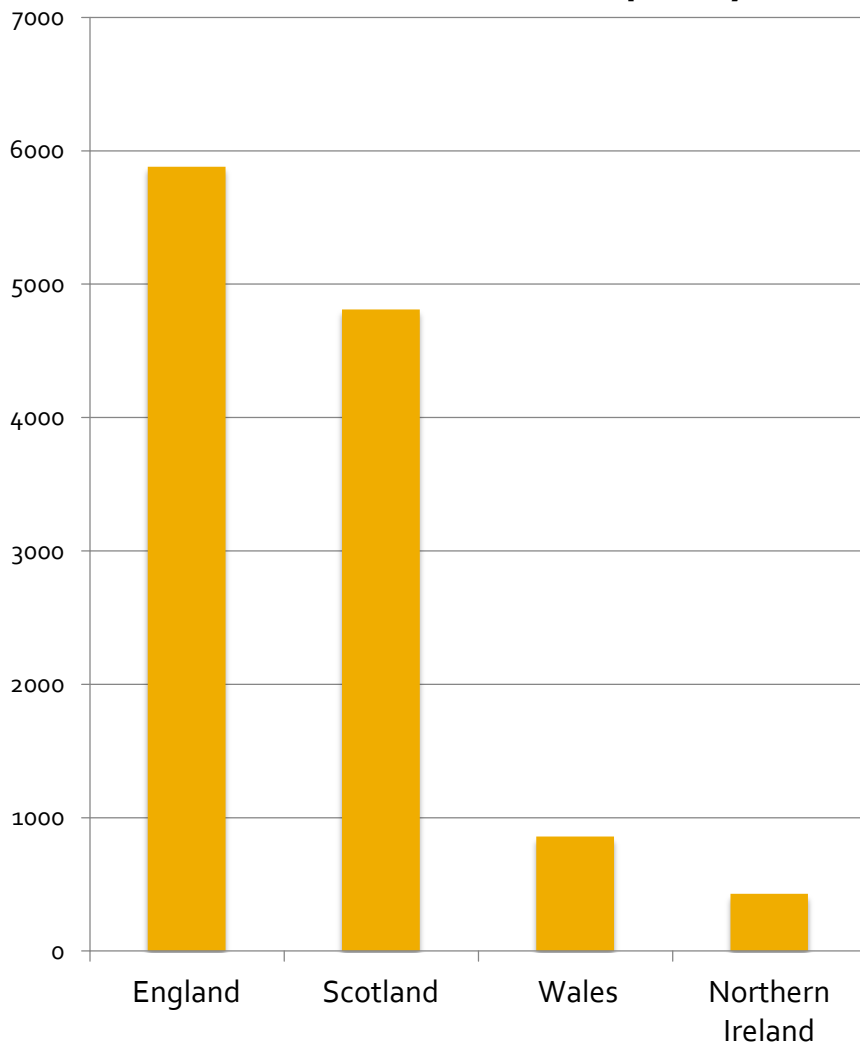
Installed renewable energy capacity in the UK 2003-2012 (MW)



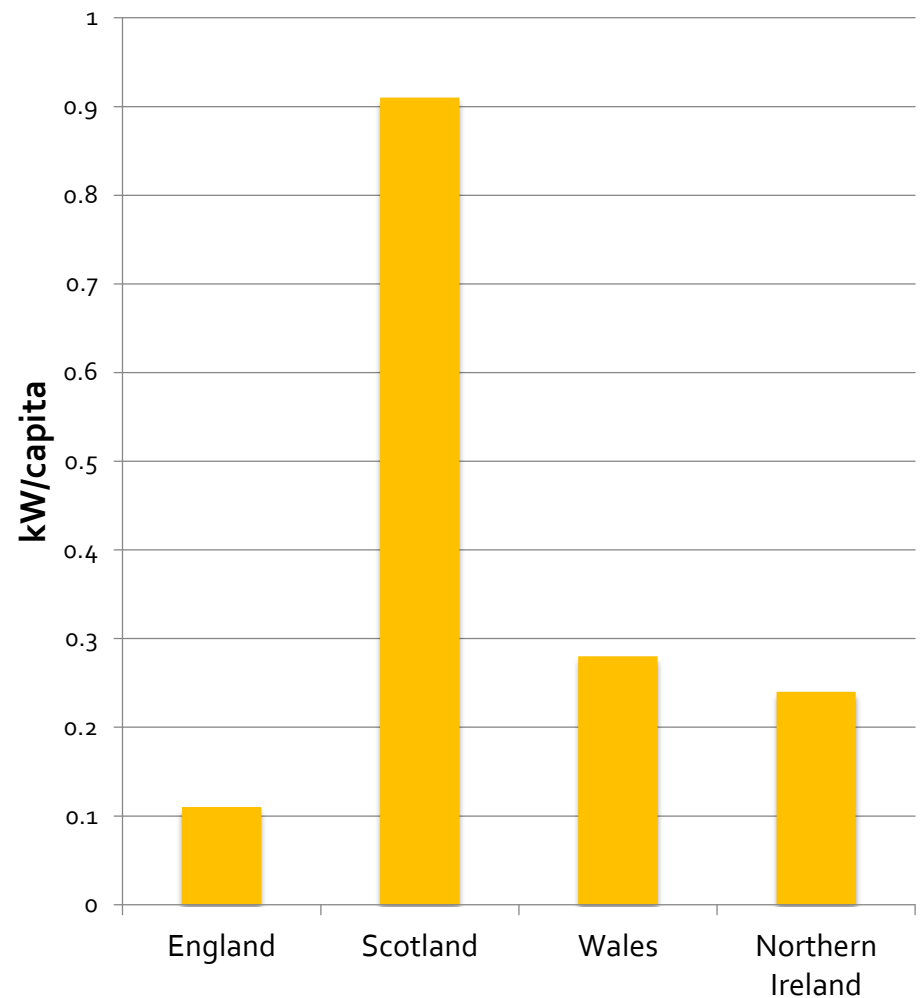
(Source: DECC 2013, RESTATS historic data)

Renewable Capacity per capita

Renewable installed capacity



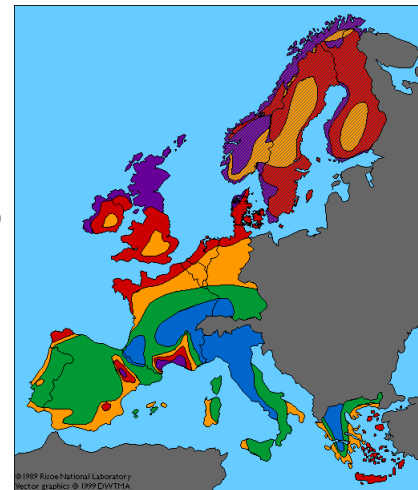
Renewable capacity per capita



| Country | Energy policy is ... | Provision of market support for renewable energy | Planning and consents (onshore) | Planning and consents (offshore) | Economic development spending |
|-----------------------|----------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
| Northern Ireland | Fully devolved | Fully devolved | Fully devolved | Fully devolved | Fully devolved |
| Scotland | Executively devolved | Scope to shape delivery of some schemes | Fully devolved | Fully devolved | Fully devolved |
| Wales | Not devolved | No powers | Partial powers over planning policy and consent for smaller schemes (below 50MW) | Power to determine applications up to 1MW (exception under Transport & Works Act 1992) | Fully devolved |
| Westminster & England | Full competence | Full competence | Full policy competence for England, partial for Wales; full competence over major projects (50MW plus) | Full competence for English and Welsh Waters (subject to Welsh exceptions, above) | Fully devolved |

Wind energy and the shaping of territorial priorities

- Devolved Administrations host the greatest renewable resources and over half installed capacity of the UK.
- UK state is responsible for meeting EU renewable energy target:
 - 15% of total energy by 2020
 - Devolved administration proportionally exceed these targets
- Complex regional relationships and nationalistic influences on priorities for renewable energy development



Planning and the territorialisation of wind in the UK

- National planning guidance as a key instrument of territorialisation:
 - Scotland's anti-nuclear stance and post-independence energy economy;
 - Wales steering of large scale projects and limits on autonomy;
 - Northern Ireland's regulation-lite;
 - English Conservatism and landscape protection.
- *Yet* each have a shared emphasis on streamlining decision and 'infrastructuralism'
- Local politicisation – national territorialisation

Final thoughts

- Understanding the geographic scales of energy governance: nation states, communities *and* sub-national government.
- The resilience of dominant energy pathways and energy-as-infrastructure.
- Insights into the spatial politics of the low carbon transition:
 - Multi-level governance and the specificity of place
 - Both challenging *and* reinforcing different types of territorial relationships



Thank you

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